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VICTORIA
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A PICTURE BOOK OF THE WORK OF JOHN CONSTABLE

PRICE SIXPENCE

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Frank Simpson

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& ALBERT
MUSEUM

A PICTURE BOOK OF THE WORK OF JOHN CONSTABLE

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JOHN CONSTABLE, R.A.

1776-1837

The Victoria and Albert Museum possesses over one hundred oil paintings and more than three hundred water-colours and drawings by John Constable. Almost the whole of this important collection was given to the Museum in 1888 by the artist's daughter, Miss Isabel Constable ; but two of the most important oils, large studies for " The Leaping Horse " and " The Hay Wain," were bequeathed by Henry Vaughan ; and the great gift of John Sheepshanks included six Constables, among them " Salisbury Cathedral " and " Hampstead Heath."

John Constable—a miller's son, like Rembrandt—was born in 1776 (the year after Turner and Girtin) at East Bergholt, in Suffolk. With the backing of Sir George Beaumont and with the help of Joseph Farington, R.A., he abandoned the prospects offered by the family business, entered the Royal Academy schools, and started on a career that has linked him with Gainsborough, Reynolds and Turner as one of the great masters of the British School. He painted the English landscape that he knew and loved, rarely travelling further for his subjects than the valley of the Stour with its mills and its waters, the beach at Brighton and Weymouth, and the cathedral and meadows at Salisbury, the home of his friend Archdeacon Fisher. Hampstead Heath (he lived at Well Walk, Hampstead, for the last ten years of his life) presented him with some of his finest material. He was the first British painter to break right away from the landscapes of tradition that were favoured in his time, with their smooth glazes, their artifices of classical composition and their inevitable brown tree to right or left. He astounded, almost shocked, his contemporaries by his loose method, his broken colour, his free

use of the palette knife. In his own words he was the first to portray nature " without fal-de-lal or fiddle-de-dee." He stood outdoors in the wind and the rain ; he painted the big movement of the sky, the fleeting phases of light and shade that make unity between sky and earth ; his work is all silvery, windy, delicious. " What I aim at in my pictures," he wrote, " is light—dews—breezes—bloom—and freshness ; not one of which has yet been perfected in the canvas of any painter in the world." His originality of outlook and his boldness of method, though never fully appreciated in England during his own lifetime, have since exercised enormous influence on British landscape art ; and the exhibition of his " Hay Wain " and other landscapes at the Salon of 1824 startled the art world of Paris and helped to revolutionise landscape painting in France. It may well be said that, without Constable, there might never have been an Impressionist School.

The collection of Constable's work in the Museum covers the whole of his career, from 1796, when he was still working in his father's mill, to 1835, two years before his death. A visit to the Constable gallery (Room 99) is the more instructive because it contains not only finished pictures but all kinds of studies, large and small; and it is the unfinished studies that contain some of Constable's most brilliant and inspired work.

BOOKS TO CONSULT :—

C. R. Leslie, R.A. .. *Memoirs of the Life of John Constable, Esq., R.A.* 1843 and later editions.

Sir Charles J. Holmes *Constable.* 1901.

" " *Constable and his Influence on Landscape Painting.* 1902.

A. B. Chamberlain .. *John Constable.* 1903.

Lord Windsor .. *John Constable, R.A.* 1903.

Sir J. D. Linton .. *Constable's Sketches in Oil and Water Colour.* 1905.

E. V. Lucas .. .. *John Constable, the Painter.* 1924.

1. HEAD OF A GIRL, *c.* 1830. *Oil.*
13 in. × 12½ in. 1255—1888.

2. BOATBUILDING NEAR FLATFORD MILL, 1815. *Oil.*
20¼ in × 24½ in.

3. DEDHAM MILL, ESSEX, 1820. *Oil.*

21¼ in. × 30 in.

4. SALISBURY CATHEDRAL, 1823. *Oil.*

34 in. × 43½ in.

5. HAMPSTEAD HEATH, 1830. *Oil.*

24 in. × 31 in. 35.

6. STUDY FOR "THE HAY-WAIN," *c.* 1821. *Oil.*

54 in. × 74 in.

987—1900.

7. STUDY FOR "THE LEAPING HORSE," *c.* 1825. *Oil.*
51 in. × 74 in. 986—1900.

8. COAST SCENE WITH SHIPPING, *c.* 1824. *Oil.*

12 in. × 19 in.

120—1888.

9. BRIGHTON BEACH, WITH COLLIERS, 1824. *Oil.*

5¾ in. × 9¾ in. 591—1888.

10. SPRING, *c.* 1814. *Oil.*

$7\frac{1}{2}$ in. × $14\frac{1}{4}$ in. 144–1888.

11. WATERLOO BRIDGE: THE STATE OPENING, 1817. *Oil.*

11½ in. × 19 in. 322—1888.

12. FIR TREES AT HAMPSTEAD, 1820. *Pencil.*
9¼ in. × 6⅜ in. 251—1888.

13. MILL NEAR BRIGHTON, *c.* 1825. *Oil.*
6 in. × 4½ in. 588—1888.

14. LANDSCAPE STUDY. *Water-colour.*
8⅜ in. × 7⅛ in. 203—1888.

15. STOKE POGES CHURCH, *c.* 1832.
Water-colour.
5¼ in. × 7¾ in. 174—1888.

16. WINDMILL AND SHEEP. *Pen and water-colour.*
5 in. × 8 in. 173—1888.

17. BRIGHTON BEACH, WITH FISHING SMACKS.
Pen and water-colour.
7 in. × 10⅛ in. 340—1888.

18. FITTLEWORTH MILL, SUSSEX, 1834.
Water-colour.
8 in. × 10¾ in. 215—1888.

19. RICHMOND BRIDGE, SURREY, 1818. *Pencil.*
3¾ in. × 5 in. 264—1888.

20. A WINDMILL, 1802. *Black chalk.*
9½ in. × 11⅝ in. 841—1888.

21. OLD HOUSES, HARNHAM BRIDGE, SALISBURY, 1821.
6¾ in. × 10¼ in. *Pencil and water-colour.* 218—1888.

22. ABINGDON, FROM THE RIVER, 1821. *Pencil.*
6⅞ in. × 10¼ in. 618—1888.

23. KNOWLE HALL, WARWICKSHIRE. 1820. *Pencil.*
4½ in. × 7¼ in. 617—1888.

24. A CART AND TEAM, 1821. *Pencil.*
3¼ in. × 4⅜ in. 839—1888.

25. A CART AND HORSES, 1821. *Pencil.*
6¼ in. × 9 in. 353—1888.

26. TREES AND WATER ON THE STOUR (?), *c.* 1829. *Sepia.*
8 in. × 6¼ in. 250—1888.

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